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Rusk Says U.S. Remains Open To End Bombing

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Washington — Sec. of State Dean Rusk Wednesday said the administration remains open to halting United States bombing of North Viet Nam if and when evidence shows that such a move would be a step toward peace in Southeast Asia.

Rusk, the star attraction of a lunch marking the concluding hours of the three-day White House Conference on International Co-operation, delivered a talk clearly aimed at dissenters to current U.S. policy in Viet Nam.

Bombing Moratorium

The dissenters — who were vocal throughout the conference — have been urging as one of their key proposals a new moratorium on American bombing, arguing that such a move would “unfreeze” the present deadlock and help to propel the Viet Nam belligerents and their allies to the conference table.

Speaking against a background of expected new increases in the U.S. military effort in Viet Nam, The secretary asserted that “the path of peaceful settlement” remains open. He told his listeners that the administration, working through private diplomatic channels, is in touch regularly (“every week”) with representatives of the North Vietnamese regime.

Hence, he continued, the intentions and policies of the Hanoi government are not questions administration officials “have to speculate about.” Rather American policymakers will know when a new bombing pause might be helpful.

Tangled Debate

In the main body of his talk, Rusk made a new effort to unscramble the increasingly tangled debate over Viet Nam and focus public attention on the underlying reason for the United States’ involvement in Southeast Asia—the long-range effort to counter Chinese expansionism.

The greatest question faced by the world’s peacemakers, said the secretary, is “what to do about the phenomenon of appetite.” This phenomenon, he continued, “is put forward in its harshest violence” by the government of Communist China.

Rusk recalled that one of his diplomatic colleagues, a man he identified only as an individual no one could describe as a capitalist, observed to him recently that the main problem the world faces is turning the Peking regime toward the path of peaceful coexistence.

Success of Policy

How Communist Chinese philosophy will evolve in the future, said the secretary, “depends on how they assess the success of their current policy.” He indicated that a key aspect of United States’ policy is to demonstrate to the Chinese the futility of their current militancy.

In an unusual acknowledgment of American use of undercover forces around the globe, Rusk defended the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency — activities he insisted are conducted with the full knowledge and authorization of top government officials.

“There is a tough struggle going on in back alleys all over the world,” he observed, a struggle whose outcome the United States can’t let fall to adversaries by default.

DEAN RUSK
Talks to Dissenters

CIA operatives have carried out their responsibilities “with a good deal of gallantry,” said Rusk.

Views Excluded

The secretary excluded from his remarks the personal invective which characterized many of the pro- and anti-administration views expressed by others earlier in the conference.

The clarity of his remarks and the candor with which he replied to questions, many of them sharply pointed, put to him by conference participants brought his more than 1000 listeners to their feet in a round of standing applause as he concluded.

At a final session later in the day the reports of the 30 citizen panels, together with summaries of the participants’ discussion of them, were presented to administration officials.